tions such as "the differential impact of development processes on women and men" (p.6), premarital negotiations, the variable impacts of Islamic oppositional movements and the controversial practice of female circumcision.

Like other researchers who have stressed the importance of incorporating into economic analyses all of the work activities performed by women, men and children, Hoodfar demonstrates the major contributions made to economic survival by the performance of unpaid reproductive work such as cooking and childcare. In her comprehensive analysis of survival strategies, she also includes the significance of frugality in planning monetary expenses, of unregulated activities like peddling, of communal contributions supporting life-cycle events and of both horizontal and vertical social networks. One of the most important of the social network systems that Hoodfar describes is the continuous formation of neighbourhood savings associations, these paralleling the formal banking and loan sector to which many lower income households are denied access.

This book also contains a very significant discussion of the gendered practices of seeking, and deciding whether to maintain, different categories of wage employment. From the early 1980s to the early 1990s, she observed a shift in families' preferences with respect to their sons' educational and vocational goals. Many lower-income parents now encourage their male children to pursue apprenticeships in the manual trades as opposed to further academic education. She also found that state employees with "white-collar" positions are forced to either take on second and third jobs in the unregulated sector or ask for unpaid leave from their permanent posts in order to earn substantially higher wages abroad in neighbouring oil-producing countries. Girls and women, in contrast, now complete more years of formal education than previously. Despite difficulties that include the necessity of arranging childcare, some married women with young children continue to work in relatively low-paying government positions partly because of the associated benefits such as maternity leaves and an old age pension plan. Hoodfar found that, by the early 1990s, many women had adopted the practice of veiling; although to some outsiders this strategy might appear to be automatically associated with a reduction in women's access to "modern" economic and political autonomy, she describes how it became a crucial means by which some women were comfortable travelling to earn wage incomes outside the vicinity of their residential neighbourhoods. Other women instead prefer to earn money in self-employment activities (e.g., operating market stalls). To a great extent, the economic survival of households is based on women being able to take advantage of the services available in public institutions and to respond quickly to opportunities to purchase subsidized food items in government shops; both of these responsibilities require someone to wait in long queues and be present when news about prices is circulated in a neighbourhood.

Hoodfar's book includes a discussion of not only labour and consumption patterns but also of the different types of financial arrangements established by the members of Cairo households. In coincidence with her approach to other areas of analysis, rather than adopting previously defined categories for budgeting and money management strategies, she allows her detailed empirical data to lead her toward an excellent account of the patterns underlying the heterogeneity that she finds characterizes the relationships of married couples. One of the most interesting elements of couples' negotiations involves women and men's sometimes varying interpretations of the Islamic tenet that men have the obligation to provide their wives and children with basic economic support. Hoodfar argues that "This religiously sanctioned arrangement, which few social scientists have paid much attention to, has given Egyptian women of the 'working poor' an advantage over many of their counterparts in other parts of the Third World such as Latin America" (p. 142).

The title of this ethnography—which for many readers will invoke the influential 1981 collection *Of Marriage and the Market* (Young, Wolkowitz, and McCullagh [eds.], Routledge and Kegan Paul)—is tied to a clear thread that runs throughout the text:

> Women's apparent conservatism and their adherence to Islamic traditions have a material basis, as they defend their privileges in the face of rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions and the commercialization of the economy, which increase their dependence on their husbands. When terms are agreeable, women take full advantage of the labor market. (P. 103)

The valuable work that Hoodfar has accomplished in empirically documenting and carefully analyzing the strategies that Egyptian women and men have adopted in the face of the ravages of global inequality is to be applauded and should be widely read.

Jean-Loup Amselle, *Mestizo Logics: Anthropology of Identity in Africa and Elsewhere,* Claudia Royal (trans.), Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, 207 pages.

Reviewer: *Deirdre Meintel*
Université de Montréal

The publication in English translation of Jean-Loup Amselle's remarkable work, *Logiques métisses* (1990) is a most welcome addition to the new literature on ethnicity. In an earlier work, Amselle sought to demonstrate the determining role of the colonial state in creating artificially fixed boundaries that belied the fluidity and continuity that had characterized African societies (Amselle et M'bokolo, 1985). Based on his research among several groups in Mali, including the Fulani, the Malinke and the Bambara, Amselle makes a strong case in *Mestizo Logics* for the constructed character of these societies

as ethnic groups. Rather than clearly separated units, where culture, language, political boundaries and social grouping coincide, he proposes a "chain of societies," a "labile continuum" of cultural schemas and practices governed by a kind of "hybrid logic" (a term that I prefer to the title used in the translation); that is, a "continuist approach" that emphasizes generalized, long-term syncretism where group boundaries exist in a state of flux that goes back as far as can be known. Amselle's "chain of societies" brings to mind Lee Drummond's well-known "cultural continuum" (1980), but takes a more radically constructivist approach, and is less encumbered by notions of pre-existing "cultural systems."

In comparison to writers in the postmodernist current like Drummond and Fischer (1986), Amselle focusses more on social collectivities (ethnic groups, villages, chiefdoms) than on individuals, a feature that should make the book all the more interesting to English-speaking readers. Possibly because of the North American tendency to focus on changes in individuals' identity rather than group definitions, it is rare to find the issue of shifting ethnic boundaries grounded in as much historical data as this book offers.

Also, Amselle's approach makes a refreshing change from the volontaristic tone of many discussions of the construction of ethnic identities (e.g., Mary Water's *Ethnic Options*). Waters' emphasis on individual choices is probably ethnographically accurate in contexts such as the American, but is not necessarily universal, and probably would not work well in the African context. Amselle's book brings out the importance of studying changes in ethnic boundaries on the group level even when individual changes of identity are also at issue. For example, the change of individuals' identifications from "Canadien français" to Québécois was accompanied by important changes on the collective level for Quebec as well as concomitant changes of political relationships between French speakers in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

The new introduction to the English version of this book underscores another very important point in Amselle's approach to identity; namely, that identities are not exclusive: "for instance, social actors may define themselves simultaneously as Moslems and pagans" (p. xi). Now that in Anglo North America, mixedness and cumulative identities seem (finally) to be gaining legitimacy in public and popular discourse, the point is all the more salient to ethnic studies on these shores.

The French edition of this work elicited widespread commentary among Africanists, not always entirely favourable. Some hold, for instance, that Amselle accords too great a weight to colonial regimes in the shaping of essentialized notions of ethnic identity in Africa. However, leaving aside this issue, as it lies beyond this writer's areas of expertise, I would emphasize the general theoretical interest of *Mestizo Logics*. Indeed, it would be unfortunate if this work were thought to be of interest only for Africanists. Besides its innovative approach to ethnicity, one should note the book's concise, pointed discussion of what he calls "American culturalist anthropology" (chap. 2), for example, not to mention the chapter on Bambara religion, intriguingly titled, "White Paganism." One of the great pleasures of reading Amselle's work (this volume and others) is the author's capacity to combine the French *savant*'s broad knowledge of philosophy and history with familiarity with English-speaking authors and their emprical findings.

Finally, a word on the translation. Claudia Royal's rendering of *Logiques métisses* is, on the whole, quite readable, but at times is burdened by a hypercorrectness more in line with French standards of precision than with English usage; for example, "originary syncretism" instead of "original syncretism" (p. 1). Above all, the book's title is misleading. Most North Americans would assume from the title that the work is about Mexicans or Mexican-Americans (Chicanos). "Mestizo" in English does not have the same generalizing capacity as the word "métisse" in French, which can be used in reference to various kinds of mixture. Indeed, in this book, métissage has mostly to do with "mixedness" of various types among Africans, whereas "mestizo" connotes the mixedness of Indian and Spanish following the Conquest. And while "logiques" works well in the French title, singulars and plurals do not always translate literally from French to English. To give slightly facetious examples, while "connaissances" can sometimes mean "acquaintances," it never can be "knowledges"; "cheveux" can only rarely be rendered as "hairs" (as in, "counting the hairs on his head"). I think that *Logiques métisses* would have been better served by a title such as "Hybrid Logic." (Some might object to the botanical aura of "hybrid," though "hybridity" is now well established in the vocabulary of Cultural Studies.) In any case, it is to be hoped that these minor issues will not deter *Mestizo Logics* from finding the wide readership it deserves.

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